Accordingly, NET or its equivalent examination accredited by the UGC, has been made compulsory qualification for appointment as Lecturer even for the candidates having Ph.D. degree. The UGC has, however, decided that the candidates, who have completed MPhil degree by 31-12-1993 or have submitted Ph.D. thesis to the university in the concerned subject on or before 31-12-2002, are exempted from appearing in the NET examination. In case, such candidates fail to obtain Ph.D. degree, they shall have to pass the NET examination.

Another station at Antarctica

4441. SHRI K.RAMA MOHANA RAO : Will the Minister of OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the number of stations set up by India in Antarctica;

(b) the programmes being researched at those stations; and

(c) the future plan for setting up another station?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) India has set up two permanent stations in Antarctica, namely 'Dakshin Gangotri' during 1983 and 'Maitri' during 1988.

(b) Since 1983/1988 the stations have been providing requisite infrastructure facilities for accommodating the Wintering and Summer teams and for carrying out scientific research in the fields of Atmospheric Sciences and Global Change, earth sciences, Engineering and Communication, Biology and E iviron-ment'Sciences, etc.

(c) For establishment of another permament station in Antarctica, necessary reconnaissance survey will be taken up during 2004-05.

Railway projects in Iraq

4442.SHR1TARINIKANTA ROY: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) details of the ongoing railway projects in Iraq where Indian Railways or any of its agency is involved, project-wise;

(b) fate of these projects since Coalition forces attacked Iraq; and

(c) whether there has been any change in the contracts of rules since the attack*^